

148. STERNA (sp. inc.). *Tern.*

I saw many White Terns in the Kara Su marsh, but could not identify them to my satisfaction.

149. LARUS CANUS L. *Common Gull.*

On January 12, 1904, during very cold and stormy weather, a large flock arrived, which remained till February 12, when it disappeared, probably returning to the sea—at least 150 kilometres distant—by easy stages, as on the 28th I saw numbers on the Lake of Ostrovo, halfway between Monastir and Salonika. During their stay the birds haunted the slaughter-houses and kitchen-gardens, winging their way towards the Kara Su marshes at sundown. All were in immature plumage, so far as I could observe.

150. LARUS RIDIBUNDUS L. *Black-headed Gull.*

The flock of Common Gulls referred to above was accompanied by about forty Black-headed Gulls in winter plumage. There must have been about three hundred Gulls in all, and they disappeared at the same time. The natives assured me that the occurrence was not an unusual one in severe winters.

151. PODICIPES CRISTATUS L. *Crested Grebe.*

On May 30, 1904, a Bulgar brought me a live male, which he had picked up in a field close to the town.

152. PODICIPES FLUVIATILIS (Tunst.). *Dabchick.*

On May 16, 1904, I found an egg in the marsh which I feel sure belonged to a bird of this species.

XVI.—*On some Birds collected by Mr. Douglas Carruthers in the Syrian Desert.* By P. L. SCLATER, D.Sc., F.R.S.

(Plate XV.)

MR. DOUGLAS CARRUTHERS, having finished his engagement at the Syrian Protestant College at Beyrout (see 'Ibis,' 1904, p. 310, and 1905, p. 296), arranged with a friend, Mr. J. H. Miller, to make an excursion into the Syrian

Desert beyond Damascus. for the purpose of collecting specimens of the mammals and birds of that little-known district.

They went from Beyrout to Damascus by railway, on February 15th, 1905, and on the 18th made a short excursion to Hejana, a small village about four hours' drive from Damascus, situated at the edge of the desert, but surrounded by cultivated land. Here they stayed nearly a week collecting birds (which included *Saxicola finschi*, *Linota cannabina*, &c.) and hunting gazelles in the desert; after which they returned to Damascus.

On the 28th of February, Messrs. Carruthers and Miller made a fresh start from Damascus with a covered cart and two horses for Kuryatein, on the route to Palmyra, and arrived at Kutifeh the same day, and at Deir-Stiyeh on March 1st. Here they camped outside the village, and on March 2nd reached Kuryatein, where they stayed in the house of Pastor Prip—a missionary resident there.

Kuryatein (*Coradæa*) is situated at the western end of a broad valley which leads due east to Palmyra, about 40 miles distant, and from its numerous springs and consequent fertility is characterized in Murray's Handbook as "a paradise in the midst of a dreary waste." At Kuryatein and in the district around the travellers stayed about six weeks, and the greater part of their collection of birds, as will be seen from the list, was formed in that region. An excursion to Palmyra was planned, and that famous spot was reached on the 14th of March, but the travellers being unprovided with proper passports were not allowed to remain. Many smaller excursions were also made from Kuryatein into the surrounding hills, where good sport was obtained with gazelles and the ibex (*Capra sinaitica*). Of the latter, five were shot in one day, so that they appear to be still abundant in the district.

On April 11th, walking along under the "great white cliff" near the springs at Jebar five hours from Kuryatein, Mr. Carruthers says (in his journal):—"Here was a paradise of bird-life—Kestrels in dozens, Ibises, Rock-

Pigeons, Egyptian Vultures, Kites, Alpine Swifts, and Saker Falcons. A wonderful sight it was, all these birds wheeling about in the air, and not one leaving the neighbourhood, as all were nesting."

Finally leaving Kuryatein on April 15th the travellers reached Nebk in the afternoon of the next day, and Damascus (*viâ* Kutifeh) on the 19th of April.

After a short stay in Damascus, Mr. Carruthers and his friend paid a visit to Petra, which is now easily reached by the new Hedjaz Railway to M'aán, designed ultimately to go on to Mecca. From M'aán donkeys conveyed them to Petra in about six hours. A few birds were obtained there, *Agrobates galactodes*, *Amydrus tristrami*, and *Carpodacus sinaiticus*.

During their three months' absence from Beirut, Messrs. Carruthers and Miller collected 155 specimens of mammals and birds. Of these the first offer was naturally made to the American College at Beirut, where Prof. Day selected 43 specimens for the Museum. The remainder were brought to England and were acquired by the British Museum. Of these, 87 were birds, which, by the kind permission of the authorities of that Institution, I have been able to examine and of which I now propose to give an account.

I regret exceedingly that I was absent from England when Mr. Carruthers returned from Syria, and that he had left this country to go on the Ruwenzori Expedition (see above, p. 222) before I came back, so that I was not able to meet him, and get him to write some field-notes, which would have added greatly to the value of the present paper. But the great Syrian Desert is so little explored that I think it advisable to publish a complete list of the species of which examples were obtained by Messrs. Carruthers and Miller, although they have been, of course, mostly enumerated by Canon Tristram in his standard work on the 'Fauna and Flora of Palestine.'

The 87 skins from the Syrian Desert acquired by the British Museum are referable to 43 species, all of which

save 4 are mentioned in Canon Tristram's work. These four additions are *Pyrhacorax graculus*, *Geronticus comatus*, *Machetes pugnav*, and *Emberiza citriniventris*, the last-named being, as I believe, new to science. It is right to add that all Mr. Carruthers's skins are well made and in excellent condition, and are properly labelled with the exact date and locality, and the colours of the soft parts.

There is still more good work in Ornithology to be done in the Syrian Desert, and I hope that among our young and enterprising members some one may be found to continue Mr. Carruthers's explorations. With two railways running from the Mediterranean to Damascus the Syrian Desert is very easy of access.

Mr. Carruthers's father, the Rev. W. Mitchell-Carruthers, of Holbrook Rectory, Ipswich, has most kindly lent me his son's journal, from which I have extracted the particulars above given as to his journey and the field-notes relating to some of the species. I wish to offer Mr. Mitchell-Carruthers my sincere thanks for this favour, without which I could hardly have ventured to prepare this paper.

I now proceed to the list of species, adding references to Canon Tristram's work.

1. SAXICOLA ANANTHE.

Saxicola ananthe Tristr., Fauna and Flora of Palestine, p. 32.

a. ♂. Kuryatein, 27.3.05; *b.* ♀. 5.4.05.

2. SAXICOLA ISABELLINA.

Saxicola isabellina Tristr., op. cit. p. 34.

a. ♂. Hejana, east of Damascus (2000 ft.), 13.2.05; *b.* ♂. Kuryatein, 4.4.05.

3. SAXICOLA MELANOLEUCA.

Saxicola melanoleuca Tristr., op. cit. p. 33; Dresser, B. of E. i. pl. xxvi.

Kuryatein: *a.* ♀. 31.3.05; *b.* ♂. 1.4.05; *c.* ♂ jr. 3.4.05; *d.* ♂. 4.4.05; *e.* ♂. 6.4.05.

4. SAXICOLA FINSCI.

Saxicola finschi Tristr., op. cit. p. 34.

a. ♂. Hejana, 18.2.05; b, c. ♀ ♀. 20.2.05.

5. SAXICOLA MÆSTA.

Saxicola mæsta Tristr., op. cit. p. 34.

a. ♂ (ad.); b. ♂ (jr.); c. (jr.); Kuryatein, 11.4.05.

6. SAXICOLA LUGENS.

Saxicola lugens Tristr., op. cit. p. 34.

a. ♀. Kuryatein, 24.3.05.

7. SAXICOLA LEUCOMELA.

Saxicola leucomela Tristr., op. cit. p. 35.

Kuryatein: a. ♂. 23.3.05; b. ♀. 27.3.05; c. ♀. 31.3.05.

8. PRATINCOLA RUBETRA.

Pratincola rubetra Tristr., op. cit. p. 36.

a. ♂. b. ♀. Kuryatein, 30.4.05.

The male bird is in beautiful breeding-dress.

9. RUTICILLA MESOLEUCA.

Ruticilla mesoleuca Tristr., op. cit. p. 37.

♂. Kuryatein, 2.2.05.

This specimen has a large white wing-patch, as shown in Dresser's figure (B. of E. i. pl. xlii.). But I have seen others (from Constantinople) with the patch much reduced in size, and clearly intermediate between the typical form and *R. phænicurus*.

10. CYANECULA SUECICA.

Cyanecula suecica Tristr., op. cit. p. 25.

a. ♂. Kuryatein, 20.3.05; b. ♀ jr. Kuryatein, 5.4.05.

Following Canon Tristram, I refer two of the Blue-throats to the Red-spotted *Cyanecula suecica*, and two to the White-spotted *C. wolfi*. But I confess that I am a little sceptical respecting the propriety of separating these two forms as species. At any rate, in Palestine, as in Egypt, both forms seem to occur in the same districts in the winter months.

11. CYANECULA WOLFI.

Cyanecula wolfi Tristr., op. cit. p. 38.

a. ♂, b. ♂. Kuryatein, 20.3.05.

12. *COSSYPHA GUTTURALIS.*

Erithacus gutturalis Tristr., op. cit. p. 30, pl. vii.

Cossypha gutturalis Dresser, Man. Pal. B. p. 68.

a. ♂. Kuryatein, 2.3.05.

A single specimen of this beautiful bird, which appears to me to be best placed in the genus *Cossypha*.

13. *AGROBATES GALACTODES.*

Aëdon galactodes Tristr., op. cit. p. 46.

Agrobates galactodes Sharpe, Hand-l. iv. p. 185 (1903).

a. Petra, 1.5.05.

Petra is far away from the main Syrian Desert on the confines of Arabia. Mr. Carruthers got a few birds there at the beginning of May, during the short excursion from Damascus already referred to, and I think it worth while to mention them, as no other ornithologist, so far as I know, has ever visited that celebrated place.

14. *MOTACILLA FLAVA.*

Motacilla flava Tristr., op. cit. p. 55.

Kuryatein: a, b. ♂, c. ♀. 5.4.05; d, e. 7.4.05.

15. *MOTACILLA MELANOCEPHALA.*

Motacilla melanocephala Tristr., op. cit. p. 55.

a. Kuryatein, 27.3.05.

This is a fine bird in full plumage, with the cap intensely black.

16. *ANTHUS CERVINUS.*

Anthus cervinus Tristr., op. cit. p. 56.

Kuryatein: a. ♂. 20.3.05; b. ♂, c. ♀. 30.3.05.

The two cock birds of this species are apparently in full plumage with bright rufous throats.

17. *LINOTA CANNABINA.*

Linota cannabina Tristr., op. cit. p. 70.

a. ♂. Hejana, 20.2.05.

This is a fine adult male in brilliant plumage.

18. *CARPODACUS SINAITICUS.*

Carpodacus sinaiticus Tristr., op. cit. p. 7.

a. ♂. Petra, 19.5.05. Bill dull yellow; feet light brown; iris light yellow.



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SPIZELLA CITRINIVENTRIS.

We might well expect to find this scarce bird at Petra, which is far on the way to the Sinaitic Peninsula. Canon Tristram met with it in the desert south of the Dead Sea.

The feet of the single specimen, which is a male in full plumage, are noted "light brown," the bill "dull yellow," and the iris "dark hazel."

19. *EMBERIZA CITRINIVENTRIS*. (Plate XV.)

Emberiza citriniventris Scl. Bull. B. O. C. xvi. p. 39 (Dec. 13th, 1905).

Suprà cinerea, pileo flavicante tincto : loris et oculorum ambitu flavescentibus : interscapulio brunneo striolato : alis nigrescentibus, primariis angustè, secundariis latè fulvo marginatis : caudâ nigricante, rectricibus utrinque duabus externis albo latè terminatis : subtus pallidè citrino-flava, gulæ lateribus, pectore et hypochondriis cinereo perfusis ; subalaribus albidis, campterio flavo tincto, remigum paginâ inferiore pallidè cinerea : rostro (in ave viva) obscuro ; pedibus pallidè brunneis : long. tota 6·0, alæ 3·7, caudæ 3·0 (poll. et dec.).

Hab. in deserto Syriaco.

Obs. *E. cinerea* quod formam omnino similis, sed ventre flavo distinguenda.

A single specimen of this apparently new Bunting was obtained by Mr. Carruthers near Kuryatein on April 8th, 1905. It is labelled "Male : no. 35 : bill and feet dusky." Mr. Carruthers was inclined to refer it to the *Emberiza cinerea* of Strickland, but it seems to be easily distinguishable from that species by its yellow belly (see the figures of *E. cinerea* in Dresser's 'Birds of Europe,' iv. pl. 207, and in Jardine's 'Memoir of Strickland,' pl. vi. p. clxiii).—In the British Museum there are three skins of an *Emberiza* from Bushire on the Persian Gulf which I believe to be referable to the female of this species. Two of these were obtained by Mr. W. D. Cumming and one by Mr. A. J. V. Palmer. It is quite likely that the range of the present bird extends into Mesopotamia and down the valley of the Euphrates to the Persian Gulf.

It is curious that no ornithological traveller, so far as I know, has ever been into Mesopotamia, which is easy of

access from either side. The would-be explorer should start early in the year from Bagdad, and come out in the late spring by the Syrian Desert. This expedition would be full of novelty and of great interest in many ways.

20. AMYDRUS TRISTRAMI.

Amydrus tristrami Tristr., op. cit. p. 74, pl. xi.

a. ♂. Petra, 30.4.05. Bill and feet black; iris dark hazel.

This fine Rock-Starling we might well anticipate would be resident at Petra.

21. PYRRHOCORAX GRACULUS.

Pyrrhocorax graculus Dresser, Man. Pal. B. p. 445.

a, b, c. ♂ s. Mountains east of Kuryatein, 1.4.05.

Canon Tristram remarks (op. cit. p. 74) that he never observed the Cornish Chough in Palestine or Syria. But there can be no question that these three specimens belong to the red-billed British species, which extends far eastwards into Kashmir and Sikkim.

22. AMMOMANES DESERTI.

Ammomanes deserti Tristr., op. cit. p. 79; Dresser B. Eur. iv. pl. 233.

a-d. ♂ ♂ ♂ ♀. Kuryatein, 24.3.05.

These birds quite agree with a Palestine specimen (Engedi, Tristram). I doubt whether *A. algeriensis* can be satisfactorily differentiated, even as a subspecies.

23. OTOCORYS PENICILLATA.

Otocorys penicillata Tristr., op. cit. p. 83; Dresser, B. Eur. iv. pl. 244.

O. penicillata, subsp. *O. bicornis* Sharpe, Cat. B. xiii. p. 532.

Eremophila alpestris bicornis Hart. Pal. Vög. pal. Faun. p. 263.

a. ♂, b. ♀. Nebk, east of Damascus, 1.3.05; c, d. ♂. 22.3.05; e. ♀. Kuryatein, 24.3.05.

The two specimens from Nebk are not so rufous above, and have the white frontal band broader. They agree with Canon Tristram's specimens from Mount Hermon. But

there is much individual variation in this bird, and it can hardly be supposed that two subspecies would occur in the same limited district.

24. *ATHENE GLAUX.*

Athene glaux Tristr., op. cit. p. 93.

a. ♂, b. ♀. Kutifeh, north of Damascus, 21.2.05.

25. *CIRCUS ÆRUGINOSUS.*

Circus æruginosus Tristr., op. cit. p. 97.

a. ♂. Kutifeh, 7.4.05.

26. *BUTEO DESERTORUM.*

Buteo desertorum Tristr., op. cit. p. 98.

a. ♂. Kuryatein, 23.3.05.

Canon Tristram did not obtain a specimen of this Buzzard, though he puts it in his list as of probable occurrence. We have now an authentic record of its presence.

27. *BUTEO FEROX.*

Buteo ferox Tristr., op. cit. p. 98.

a. ♂. Kuryatein, 31.3.05; b. ♀. Kuryatein, 6.4.05.

28. *AQUILA PENNATA.*

Aquila pennata Tristr., op. cit. p. 100.

a. ♂. Kuryatein, 30.3.05; b. ♂. April.

29. *CIRCAËTUS GALLICUS.*

Circaëtus gallicus Tristr., op. cit. p. 101.

a, b. ♂ ♂. Kuryatein, 29.3.05.

30. *MILVUS MIGRANS.*

Milvus migrans Tristr., op. cit. p. 102.

a. ♂, b. ♀. Kuryatein, 26.3.05.

31. *FALCO CENCHRIS.*

Falco cenchris Tristr., op. cit. p. 106.

Kuryatein: a. ♂. 1.3.05; b. ♂, c. ♀. 1.4.05; d. ♂. 11.4.05.

32. *ARDEA RALLOIDES.*

Ardea ralloides Tristr., op. cit. p. 110.

a. ♂. Kuryatein, 4.4.05.

33. NYCTICORAX GRISEUS.

Nycticorax griseus Tristr., op. cit. p. 111.

a. Damascus, 10.4.05.

34. GERONTICUS COMATUS.

Corvus eremita Linn. S. N. i. p. 159 (1766) ?

Comatibis eremita Rothsch., Hart., et Kleinschm. Nov. Zool. iv. p. 371.

Comatibis comata Tristr., Ibis, 1882, p. 414.

Ibis comata Dresser, B. of E. vi. pl. 408, p. 329.

Ibis eremita Dresser, Man. Pal. B. p. 586.

a. ♂, b. ♀. Kuryatein, 18.3.05. Bill and feet dark red; iris orange; bare head dark red, blue on the top.

“Shot flying home to the cliffs at Jebar, where they live and breed.” (See above, p. 308.)

This is a new locality for an interesting bird, which, however, is known to go as far north as Biledjik on the Euphrates (*Danford*).

It does not even now seem to be quite proven that this Ibis was the *Corvus eremita* of Linnæus and extended into Europe in former days. At any rate Dr. Fatio is not convinced on the subject (see above, p. 139), so it is, perhaps, better to use the first certain name.

35. PTEROCLES ARENARIUS.

Pterocles arenarius Tristr., op. cit. p. 122.

a. ♂, b. ♀. Hejana, 22.2.05.

Two other species of Sand-Grouse were also met with near Kuryatein—*Pterocles alchata* and *P. senegalensis*, but no specimens of them are in this collection.

36. CACCABIS CHUKAR.

Caccabis chukar Tristr., op. cit. p. 123.

Kuryatein: a. ♂. 22.3.05; b. ♂, c. ♀. 24.3.05.

37. PORZANA BAILLONI.

Porzana bailloni Tristr., op. cit. p. 125.

Kuryatein: a. ♂. 4.3.05; b. ♀. 1.4.05.

38. ÆGIALITIS GEOFFROYI.

Ægialitis geoffroyi Tristr., op. cit. p. 129.

a. ♂. Kuryatein, 2.3.05.

This specimen is not quite adult, but obviously belongs to the present species, which is stated by Tristram to be "very common in the Southern Wilderness (of Judea) in winter."

39. *ÆGIALITIS CANTIANA*.

Ægialitis cantianus Tristr., op. cit. p. 130.

a. ♂. Hejana, 2.2.05; b. ♀. Kuryatein, 11.4.05.

40. *ÆGIALITIS CURONICA*.

Ægialitis curonica Tristr., op. cit. p. 130.

a. ♂. Kuryatein, 11.3.05.

41. *HOPLOPTERUS SPINOSUS*.

Hoplopterus spinosus Tristr., op. cit. p. 131.

a. ♀. Kuryatein, 22.3.03.

42. *MACHETES PUGNAX*.

Machetes pugnax B. O. U. List, p. 171.

a. ♀. Hejana, 20.2.05; b. ♂, c. ♂, d. ♂. Kuryatein, 5.3.05.

The Ruff is not included in Canon Tristram's List, but occurs in Greece and Egypt, so would certainly pass through Palestine on its migration north.

43. *TRINGA MINUTA*.

Tringa minuta Tristr., op. cit. p. 133.

a. ♀. Hejana, 18.2.05.

XVII.—On a remarkable *Capercaillie* (*Tetrao urogallus lugens*). By Dr. EINAR LÖNNBERG, C.M.Z.S. &c.

(Plate XVI.)

LAST winter I had the pleasure of obtaining for the Swedish Royal Museum of Natural History a specimen of the *Capercaillie*, which roused my interest to a very high degree by its strange appearance. It came from Finland, and before long I succeeded in procuring from the same source another specimen exactly alike in size and coloration. At the same time I was informed of the existence of six similar examples, which had been shot at different times within a period of